602 subcaste assembly to discuss the case and take
613 appropriate action. Until this was done, they
621 might not resume their ties or attend ceremonies of the offending lineage. The enangar thus formally represented the local subcaste group to the individual lineage.

613 Enangar played their most important role at
881 the initiation rites of the girls of a linked lineage.
836 Every ten to twelve years, each lineage held a
581 grand ceremony in its oldest ancestral house, at which all immature girls of the lineage were on one day ritually "married" by men of enangar groups. This ceremony, called talikettukalyanam (tali-tying marriage) (3) must be performed for each girl before puberty on pain of her excommunication from caste. Before it took place, elders of the subcaste assembly selected suitable young men of the enangar lineages as ritual bridegrooms for the girls. At the ceremony, each ritual bridegroom, in the company of representatives of every lineage in the kara, tied a gold ornament (tali) round the neck of his chosen "bride." After this each couple was secluded in a room of the ancestral house for a period of four days and nights during which, if the girl were old enough, cohabitation might take place. At the end of the four days, the couples were again led before the assembled company where each tore in two the loincloth worn by the girl during the period of seclusion. They were then
581 considered ritually divorced and had no further
613 practical obligations to each other. The girls
885 were now regarded as having attained the status of mature women, ready to bear children to perpetuate their lineage.

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small neighborhoods, indeed, all the lineages were sometimes enangar to one another, although this seems to have been rare. At least one man and one woman of each of its enangar lineage had to visit a household for the life-crisis rites of its members, at which they gave ceremonial assistance and partook of a feast. These rites included the naming ceremony of a baby, the first rice feeding in the sixth month, the pre-puberty marriage rite of girls, the first menstruation ceremony of a girl, the first pregnancy ceremony of a woman, the offerings to a departed spirit which closed the period of death pollution, and the subsequent offerings each year to the spirits of recently dead members of a property group on the anniversaries of their deaths. Enangar also gave neighborly help on the day of a cremation and, during the fifteen days of death pollution, provided cooked food for the household of the bereaved.

Although whole lineages were linked as enangar to each other, a linked lineage acted as a collectivity only at the pre-puberty marriage rite, at cremations, and on the sixteenth day after a death. For the other life crises, each household of a lineage would invite as enangar partners only one household in each of their linked lineages with whom they had special customary ties. Similarly, the members of a household were not obliged to invite other branches of their own lineage to the minor life crises, although they might do so if they wished.

The enangar played their most important role at the pre-puberty marriage rite. Every ten to twelve years each lineage held a grand ceremony in its oldest ancestral house, at which time all immature girls of the lineage of one generation were ritually married by men of enangar groups. This ceremony, called *tālikettukalyānam* ("*tāli*-tying ceremony") had to be performed for each girl before puberty on pain of her excommunication from caste (Gough, 1955). Before it took place, elders of the assembly selected suitable youths of the enangar lineages as ritual bridegrooms for the girls. At the ceremony each bridegroom, in the company of representatives of every household in the neighborhood, tied a gold ornament (tāli) round the neck of his bride. Each couple was then secluded in a room of the ancestral house for three days and nights, during which, if the girl was old enough, sexual relations might take place. On the fourth day the bridegrooms departed. They had no further obligations to their brides and did not need to visit them again unless they wished. After the tāli rite, however, a girl was regarded as having attained the status of a mature woman, ready to bear children to perpetuate her lineage.

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Shortly before or after puberty she might, following the ceremony, enter without religious rites into sexual liaisons with one or more men of her own or an appropriate higher caste. Similarly, a Nayar man (whether or not he had ever performed the tāli rite) might enter into relationships with any number of women of his own or an appropriate lower Nayar caste.

These marriage customs are further discussed below. Here it is relevant to point only to the role of the *enangan* bridegroom. Since the enangar stood to the lineage as formal representatives of the local caste group, it seems appropriate to interpret the tāli rite as a ceremony of group marriage, in which the caste group as a whole married the immature girls of the lineage as a whole.

The tāli rite was indeed both a religious and a legal transaction between the lineage and the enangu or neighborhood group. If a girl was discovered to have attained puberty before it had been performed, the assembly forced her property group to expel her and to perform her funeral rites, for she was thought to be ritually dangerous to her caste as a whole. For a woman, the tāli which she wore round her neck until death was therefore a sign that she had been ceremonially and legally accepted as a mature woman of her lineage and caste, "cleared" to bear children to perpetuate both groups.

The lineage similarly operated as a unit, and the enangar fulfilled similar roles as formal links with the caste on the occasion of a funeral. All adult males of the lineage who were junior to the deceased attended his cremation, which took place in the southwest corner of the garden of his house. Representative members of all enangar households also came to help with practical tasks and to provide ritual objects for the chief mourner's ceremonies, although they were forbidden to touch or to receive food from the mourners throughout their period of pollution. In the fifteen days after the death only the deceased's household, assisted by their special enangar households, took part in the collection of the bones and ashes and made offerings to the departed spirit. Other lineage members observed death pollution in their homes and were attended by enangar there. On the fifteenth day the lineage reassembled at the house of the dead. After many ceremonies its members were purified by the funeral priest from the pollution of death. On the sixteenth day final offerings were made to the spirit. The deceased's household then held a large feast, which was shared by lineage members and representatives from all houses of the linked lineages. This reception of food by the enangar from the hands of the deceased's matrilineal kinsmen marked a

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835 At least during this century, moreover, cases have very occasionally occurred in which a Nayar cohabited both with his wife and with their daughter by the marriage or with his wife and her younger sister. Such affairs are viewed with disgust as evidence of extreme ill-breeding, but they do not merit excommunication or exclusion from public ceremonies, nor are the offenders expected to fall ill through supernatural vengeance. The reason appears to be that traditionally only matrilineal kinsfolk were regarded as kin in the true sense. Incest prohibitions outside this range were apparently a matter of propriety rather than of religious law.

604 A man's wife's sisters' children, like his own children, had an amicable relationship with him of mingled respect and playfulness. [588] After their tāli rite, however, girls were forbidden to touch their "fathers," own or classificatory, and relationships with these men [885] tended to become more grave.

607 Brothers-in-law had informal relationships. A man would defer to his wife's much older brother and expect some respect from his wife's much younger brother. Brothers-in-law of similar age had a mild joking relationship. They might chew betel leaves, loll, yarn, and gossip together. A man's sisters' husbands sometimes acted as go-betweens in arranging his first sambandham and accompanied him to [578] the house of his wife. But the surface amicability of brothers-in-law often hid very deep hostility related to conflicting claims upon the woman who linked them. This might break out in quarrels or end in mutual avoidance. The wife's brother was also often instrumental in having a man dismissed from the conjugal house.

602 574 A woman's contacts with her husband's kin were obviously less regular than those of a man. A woman never went to her husband's taravād to visit him for personal reasons but only to pay polite social calls on his kinswomen. When a man or girl began their first sambandham the man's mother and sisters customarily went to bring home his wife a few days after the husband's first visit. Often the wife's sisters would accompany her. They were given a small feast in private and the husband's mother might make a gift of jewelry to the girl before she returned home on the third or fourth day. Thereafter the frequency of feminine visits between the two households depended on the stability of the marriage, the proximity of the houses, and the personal feelings between the members. Neither husband nor wife did any tasks at all in each other's homes. Each remained always an outsider to whom polite behavior was due. Because of incest prohibitions a woman paid extreme respect to her husband's elder matrilineal kinsmen they avoided her except on ceremonial occasions.